

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A method of producing maraging steel containing from not less than 0.3 mass% to not more than 2.0 mass% of Ti and less than 15ppm of Mg, which comprises producing a consumable electrode made of the steel for vacuum remelting, and subsequently subjecting the consumable electrode to vacuum remelting in order to reduce the Mg content in the steel, wherein the consumable electrode comprises not less than 5ppm of Mg, the maraging steel after vacuum remelting contains nitride type non-metallic inclusions having a maximum length of not more than 15 μ m and oxide type non-metallic inclusions having a maximum length of not more than 20 μ m.

2. (original): A method of producing maraging steel according to claim 1, wherein the consumable electrode is produced by a vacuum induction melting process.

3. (original): A method of producing maraging steel according to claim 2, wherein the vacuum remelting is conducted by a vacuum arc remelting process.

4. (original): A method of producing maraging steel according to claim 3, wherein a maraging steel product obtained by the vacuum remelting is subjected to plastic working to produce a thin strip having a thickness of not more than 0.5 mm.

5. (previously presented): Maraging steel comprising, by mass, at least, from not less than 0.3% to not more than 2.0% Ti, from more than zero to less than 15ppm of Mg, less than 10ppm oxygen and less than 15ppm nitrogen, wherein

the maraging steel contains nitride inclusions having a size of not more than 15 μm in maximum length and oxide inclusions having a size of not more than 20 μm in maximum length, and wherein

the oxide inclusions comprise spinel form inclusions and alumina inclusions in which a content of the spinel form inclusions having a size of not less than 10 μm in length divided by a total content of the spinel form inclusions having a size of not less than 10 μm in length plus the alumina inclusions having a size of not less than 10 μm in length is more than 0.33.

6. (previously presented): Maraging steel according to claim 5, consisting essentially of, by mass not more than 0.01% C (carbon), 8.0 to 22.0% Ni, 5.0 to 20.0% Co, 2.0 to 9.0% Mo, from not less than 0.3% to not more than 2.0% Ti, not more than 1.7% Al, , less than 10ppm oxygen, less than 15ppm nitrogen, and the balance of Fe and incidental impurities.

7. (original): A thin strip which is made from maraging steel as defined in claim 5, and which has a thickness of not more than 0.5 mm.

8. (original): A thin strip which is made from maraging steel as defined in claim 6, and which has a thickness of not more than 0.5 mm.

9. (previously presented): The method according to claim 3, wherein the maraging steel after vacuum remelting contains nitride type non-metallic inclusions having a maximum length of not more than 15 μm and oxide type non-metallic inclusions having a maximum length of not more than 20 μm .

10. (previously presented): The method according to claim 9, wherein a thin strip having a thickness of not more than 0.5mm is produced by plastic working the maraging steel after vacuum remelting.

11. (previously presented): The method according to claim 4, wherein the thin strip is a component of continuously variable transmissions.

12. (previously presented): The method according to claim 10, wherein the thin strip is a component of continuously variable transmissions.

13. (previously presented): A component of continuously variable transmissions, which is made of the thin strip as defined in claim 7.

14. (previously presented): A component of continuously variable transmissions, which is made of the thin strip as defined in claim 8.

15. (new): The method according to claim 3, wherein after vacuum remelting, the maraging steel as cast and/or as hot forged is subjected to a homogenizing treatment at a temperature of 1000°C to 1300°C for at least five hours, and subsequently to plastic working to product a thin strip having a thickness of not more than 0.5 mm.

16. (new): The method according to claim 15, wherein the thin strip having a thickness of not more than 0.5 mm is a component of continuously variable transmission.

REMARKS

Review and reconsideration on the merits are requested.

Status of Claims at Time of Rejection

At the time of rejection, claims 1-14 were pending. Claims 1-14 were rejected.

The Prior Art

U.S. 4,443,254 Floreen (Floreen); JP 2001-214212 (JP '212); JP 56-090957 (JP '957);
U.S. 6,767,414 Uehara et al (Uehara); U.S. 4,871,511 Smith Jr. et al (Smith).

The Rejections

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9 and 11-14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '212
in view of Floreen and JP '957.

Claims 4, 7, 8 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '212 in
view of Floreen and JP '957 further in view of Uehara.

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith.

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith, further in
view of Uehara.

The Examiner's reading and application of the prior art is set forth in the Action and will
not be repeated here except as necessary to an understanding of Applicants' traversal which is
now presented.

Traversal

JP '212